

Boys and Girls Club of New Britain testimony to
Joint Committee on Children
February 26, 2009

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding a critical need for emergency updating of the Boys and Girls Club of New Britain facility. My name is Paul D'Addabbo and I am the Vice President and Co-chair of our Capital Campaign. I have had the privilege of serving on the Board of Directors for over a decade along with a group of dedicated volunteers and hard working staff members.

As a former President of the New Britain and Berlin United Way, I am quite familiar with how a funding process works. Key to the decision making process is the "outcome based measurement" ... The goal was to measure how well are the people you are serving were doing... after listening to Mary and Jason, need I say more about how the NB B & G Club is doing??

I do not believe there is any other agency in our community that focuses on the less fortunate kids of New Britain than we do. Every year, close to 3000 children have a safe haven to spend their after school time, where they can learn, play and become better citizens, as Mary and Jason so strongly demonstrate. To many it is their second home and no child is ever turned away for financial reasons. If you care to do the math, with our current \$1.1 million dollar budget, our cost is about \$400 per member. What a bargain...taking care of these children for less than \$400 per year!

It's exciting to see every afternoon the school buses drive up and the kids come hustling into their club for their after school programs. We continually ask ourselves... are we being good stewards of our funders money and each time, after seeing the smile on the children's faces, the answer is a resounding yes. Our goal is, was and always will be to get to these youth in a positive manner *before* the "streets" get them, which would leave our community with a much larger and more difficult problem to deal with.

In order to continue to accommodate the ever increasing number of children utilizing our Club, the structural integrity of the building must be maintained. We have not had a capital campaign since 1991. During these intervening years the building has been stretched with the membership *doubling* and now we need to raise \$3,000, 000 to update the present facility located in the center of New Britain.

We are asking the state for \$1.3 million that will help us to immediately replace the roofing and gutters for \$215,000, new updated heating and ventilating system for \$245,000, and a safe drop off bus turn around that entailed buying an adjacent house and making the safe off street turn around for \$290,000. Other improvements will include interior renovations \$493,000, Playschool for \$84,000, Back outside basketball courts

\$116,000 and several other improvements. We plan to raise the balance of \$1.7 million with our continuing fund raising efforts and partnerships formed with our business community.

We are well aware of the challenging economic conditions we are all facing today but we are also aware of the critical need for repairing and updating the Boys and Girls Club of New Britain. Unfortunately, these issues can not be put off any longer. Hopefully, you will help us to maintain that unduplicated safe home for many less fortunate kids in New Britain.

We, and the kids of New Britain, thank you.